

Remarks

I. Status of the Claims

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-4 are pending.

Claims 16-19 have been canceled herein, without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 5-15 and 20-31 were previously canceled.

Claims 1-4 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter from now-canceled claims 16-19, respectively, i.e., to specify that the organic compounds that act as one of the reactants have been limited to antibacterial agents, antifungal agents, insecticides, noxious insect repellants, perfumes, deodorants, antifouling agents, curing agents for coating materials, accelerators for coating materials, resins, adhesives, natural essential oils, antioxidants and vulcanization accelerators. Thus, no new matter is added by these amendments.

All amendments herein are made without prejudice or disclaimer as to all deleted subject matter. Applicants specifically reserve the right to pursue all deleted subject matter in one or more divisional and/or continuation application.

II. Claim rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-4 and 16-19, which depend from claims 1-4, respectively, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over EP 0 706 997 A1 to Saito et al. ("Saito"). The Examiner contends that Saito renders the claims obvious because it teaches the presently claimed phenolic molecular compounds having sulfonyl functional groups substituted on the phenol rings, wherein the present variables X, A, and B, as defined in the present Formulas (II) through (V), are a SO₂ group.

The Examiner asserts that claims 1-4 and 16-19 would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, who would expect that the phenolic compounds taught by Saito contain residual water or

solvent from their preparation, which would cause such phenolic compounds to be molecular compounds as recited by the present claims.

In response, without conceding the validity of the Examiner's rejection, claims 16-19 have been canceled herein, and claims 1-4 have been amended to specify that the organic compounds that act as one of the reactants (i.e., the "non-phenolic" reactant) have been limited to antibacterial agents, antifungal agents, insecticides, noxious insect repellants, perfumes, deodorants, antifouling agents, curing agents for coating materials, accelerators for coating materials, resins, adhesives, natural essential oils, antioxidants and vulcanization accelerators.

Thus, the molecular compounds recited in claims 1-4 as amended are prepared by reacting the phenolic compounds with the organic compounds selected from antibacterial agents, antifungal agents, insecticides, noxious insect repellants, perfumes, deodorants, antifouling agents, curing agents for coating materials, accelerators for coating materials, resins, adhesives, natural essential oils, antioxidants and vulcanization accelerators.

Saito neither teaches nor suggests reacting phenolic compounds with antibacterial agents, antifungal agents, insecticides, noxious insect repellants, perfumes, deodorants, antifouling agents, curing agents for coating materials, accelerators for coating materials, resins, adhesives, natural essential oils, antioxidants and vulcanization accelerators, and thus does not teach or suggest the organic compounds recited by the amended claims.

Moreover, the teachings of Saito would not motivate one of ordinary skill in the art at the relevant time (i.e., the time of filing of the present application) to arrive at the present invention. The invention of Saito relates to a phenolic compound which is used as a developer (see Saito at col. 1, lines 9-17). As such, one of ordinary skill in the art at the relevant time would not be motivated to react the phenolic compound of Saito with organic compounds such as antibacterial agents, antifungal agents, or the like to obtain the claimed molecular compounds, because the claimed molecular compounds would have no use in the application(s) contemplated by Saito.

At least for these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Saito, either alone or in combination with ordinary skill in the art, does not render any one of claims 1-4 obvious. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 1-4 be withdrawn.

III. Conclusion

This application is believed to be in condition for allowance, which is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes there are further issues that could be advance by an interview or entry of an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney.

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Respectfully submitted,

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